



Office of
Jason Crowell State Senator
The Crowell Connection

Senator Jason Crowell – Serving Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison, Mississippi, Perry, and Scott Counties.

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In Memorial

On this coming Monday, many Americans will assemble before monuments, visit cemeteries and line the streets during parades commemorating the more than a million American service members who have lost their lives in this nation's wars. Others will



gather with family and friends to mark the day of observance with a picnic or barbeque.

Although the type of celebration may vary from person to person, what we all celebrate stays the same—the ultimate sacrifice for liberty. We live in a nation that has remained the flagship land of the free due to the brave members of the armed services who have put our country before their own lives. Freedom has always been at

the forefront of the American battlegrounds, whether the wars were fought on our own soil or on lands across the seas.

As we live and breathe today, the ranks of the nation's veterans grow, some of whom will perish so that liberty can thrive. Thousands of American men and women are defending the tenets of democracy in Iraq, Afghanistan and a host of other politically unstable regions around the globe. As in all our wars past, America's service men and women are sacrificing a great deal so that we here at home can enjoy the rights that their courage makes possible—the freedom of speech, the freedom to choose our own religion,

the freedom to pursue our dreams.

When a soldier goes into warfare, it is with the knowledge that he or she might not return home. That recognition does not weaken their fight. And it is for that courageousness that we are forever indebted, and it is for the lost fight that we are full of sorrow.

The brave men and women who do not make it out of war alive are more than just a statistic or an engraved name on a plaque. Each is a person who was loved, who left behind a family, friends, a home and a community. Each deserves to be remembered and honored for paying the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

This Memorial Day, we need to focus on what we can do to support and honor our veterans. This legislative session, my colleagues and I worked hard to pass legislation to help Missouri's veterans and thank them for their sacrifice. House Bill 654 is one bill that is on the governor's desk



awaiting his signature that will impact our former service men and women. The bill increases the amount of matching grants to be awarded annually for veterans' service officer programs by the Missouri Veterans Commission from \$750,000 to \$1 million. These veterans' service officers help our veterans access the benefits they deserve. HB 654 also creates the Stolen Valor Act of 2007, which makes it unlawful for any person to knowingly misrepresent himself or herself as a veteran or a medal recipient. The legislation also creates a real and personal property tax exemption for all property of a veterans' organization with a congressional charter. This is an important issue since many of the veterans' organizations of our state are becoming smaller in size and membership.

This session, we also passed HB 444, a bill that I championed in the Senate. This legislation phases out state income taxes on Social Security benefits, Social Security disability, and non-private retirement benefits. By 2012, the tax relief act will cover veterans' pensions up to the maximum Social Security benefit, currently \$32,500.

Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: jcrowell@senate.mo.gov or visit me on the web at <http://www.jasoncrowell.com>.

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